

reach the number of 60, then technically this debate cannot move forward. I use the word "technically" because in honesty, that will not be the end if we do not muster 60 votes. This matter is going to come before the Senate again and again and again.

For 4 years in this war, Congress, controlled by the other party, has been virtually silent on the issue of this war and the wisdom of our policy. Those days are over. In the last few weeks we have been in session, we have had over 30 hearings by committees that have asked the hard questions about this policy, about protecting our troops, and about where we are going to go forward in the future. Those questions will continue to be asked by committees. They will continue to be addressed in the Senate. When we move to the next item of legislation, we will undoubtedly have amendments relative to this war in Iraq. This debate will not end.

I sincerely hope those on the other side of the aisle will join us. I hope they understand what is at stake. It is not just 21,000 more soldiers putting their lives on the line for America; it is a question of our foreign policy and protecting this Nation and making sure we keep our commitment to our country to keep it safe.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 30 minutes each and the time to be alternated between the two sides, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the war in Iraq is the most important issue of our time. The American people know that our soldiers are serving nobly under extraordinarily difficult circumstances and that far too many of them are making the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Citizens are calling on us—begging us—to address this issue with the seriousness and the urgency it deserves.

The House of Representatives will vote later today on a major resolution

supporting our troops and opposing the escalation of the war. It will be a historic vote and a clear response to the American people's clarion call for change. The Senate will have a chance to do so soon as well. The voices of the American people are growing louder and louder, and the need for us to act could not be clearer.

Under the President's current policy, the war continues to impose an enormous human toll on our soldiers, their families, and their loved ones. Our men and women in uniform have served with great courage and honor for nearly 4 years—longer than it took to win World War II. More than 3,000 of our forces have been killed and more than 23,000 wounded. The casualties keep mounting. Last fall was the deadliest period since the war began. Mr. President, 287 American soldiers were killed in October, November, and December. Already, 118 have been killed since the President announced the surge, and the numbers keep rising.

The toll in Massachusetts has been heavy. Just last week, CPT Jennifer Harris of Swampscott, MA, was killed when her helicopter went down north of Baghdad. She was the first woman from our State to make the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq, and our hearts and prayers go out to her family and loved ones.

So far, 65 Massachusetts members of our forces have given the last full measure of devotion to our country. The youngest was 19, the oldest was 46. They died far from their homes in Bedford and Bristol, Lawrence and Lowell, Plymouth and Pittsfield, Weymouth and Woburn, and other towns and cities across the State. They were fathers, sons, a daughter, brothers, and friends. Each of them represents a life cut short in service to our country.

More than 3,000 families across America share in such heartbreak. Their loved ones have died in Iraq, and we mourn their loss. We honor their service, and we pray that God's grace and mercy may ease the anguish of those they have left behind.

Citizens of Massachusetts have answered their country's call from the first days of the Republic, and those we honor today are members of that noble company. Each knew they were going into harm's way. They faced dangers in Iraq that vast numbers of our troops had never seen before, such as suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices.

We mourn the loss of these heroes. We honor their sacrifice and extend our deepest condolences to their families. Words cannot ease the grief of losing a loved one, but I hope the families may find comfort in the words of Abraham Lincoln in the famous letter he sent to a bereaved mother during the Civil War. He wrote:

Dear Madam, I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should at-

tempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and the lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

The consequences of the decisions we make here in Congress profoundly affect our military, their families, and the communities they have left. We have an obligation to our soldiers to make sensible decisions that will not place them needlessly in harm's way.

We in Massachusetts feel especially deeply the loss of the 65 soldiers who have died in Iraq: SGT Justin W. Garvey; PFC John D. Hart; SPC Christopher J. Holland; SGT Pierre A. Raymond; CPL Brian Oliveira; LCpl Travis Reid Desiato; LCpl Dimitrios Gavriel; SGT Andrew Farrar; 1LT Brian McPhillips; SSG Joseph P. Belavia; LCpl John J. Vangyzen IV; SGT Kurt D. Schamberg; CPT John W. Maloney; SPC Ray M. Fuhrmann II; 1SG Alan N. Griford; PVT Michael E. Bouthot; SPC Daniel R. Gionet; SGT Gregory A. Belanger; PFC Kerry D. Scott; SGT Daniel J. Londono; CPL David Marques Vincente; LCpl Jeffrey Charles Burgess; LCpl Alexander Scott Arrendodo; 1LT Travis John Fuller; CPT Benjamin Sammis; CWO2 Stephen M. Wells; SPC Matthew Boule; CWO Kyran E. Kennedy; CPT Christopher J. Sullivan; LCpl Shayne Cabino; LTC Leon G. James, II; CPT Joel E. Cahill; LCpl Michael Ford; CPL Scott Procopio; LCpl Patrick Gallagher; CPL Donald E. Fisher II; SPC Gabriel T. Palacios; SGT Benjamin E. Mejia; SGT Glenn R. Allison; GySgt Elia Paietta Fontecchio; LCpl Andrew Zabierek; LCpl Nickolas David Schiavoni; SPC Daniel F. Cunningham; LCpl Gregory E. MacDonald; SPC Peter G. Enos; PFC Norman Darling; PVT Cory R. Depew; SSG Joseph Camara; SGT Charles Caldwell; PFC Markus J. Johnson; SPC David J. Babineau; CPL Paul N. King; LCpl Geoffrey R. Cayer; SGT Mark R. Vecchione; SSG Clint J. Storey; SPC Edgardo Zayas; LCpl Eric P. Valdepenas; SPC Jared J. Raymond; LCpl Edward Garvin; LT Joshua Booth; SPC Matthew J. Stanley; SGT Gregory Wright; SFC Keith Callahan; SGT Alexander H. Fuller; and CPT Jennifer Harris.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the chart I have printed in the RECORD. It is a chart of their hometowns and where they died in Iraq.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: